



No. 124

Love Token Society

Love Letter

August 1989

Silver Certificate Exhibit Award

The Love Token Society's Margaret C. Entenmann Certificate Award for a love token exhibit at any local coin show has been awarded to William F. Charlton of North Webster, Indiana, for his exhibit at the Indiana State Numismatic Coin Show, June 9-11. A one-year membership in the Society accompanies this award.

Help, Please

Does anyone have information about this love token? Harold Beecher would appreciate learning what kind of cross this is, what language is printed and what it says. Contact him at Box 456, Paoli, PA 19301 if you can help.



Oiparia Tewojiadon
in 3^u
loujior 1905



President's Message

My progress in researching the origin and development of love tokens in Great Britain has resulted in obtaining a few very interesting articles. I also have located several large collections and two museums in England and Wales. All have agreed to allow me to view the collections and photograph any that I may want for my book. To accomplish this, I will go to England and Wales upon my return from the Pittsburgh convention. I leave on August 17 and plan to stay five weeks, returning September 20.

I cannot express too deeply or strongly the excellent cooperation I have been getting from my Great Britain contacts. It could not be any better if we had been bosom buddies for 60 years. I am really looking forward to this trip.

Again, I remind you to send any interesting stories, articles or love tokens of interest to me as soon as possible, as I am starting to put the book together and I may want to include your contribution. I will begin to give you a progress report on my Great Britain trip beginning with the October Love Letter. In the meantime, good health and good hunting for love tokens.

Sincerely,

Financial Report

Balance as of May 31, 1989		\$3,875.41
Receipts		
Dues	\$40.00	
New Members	20.00	
Contributions	5.00	
Check Account 2 Months Interest	36.13	<u>101.13</u>
		\$3,976.54
Expenses		
Check #135 Print LL 123	\$80.54	
Check #136 Labels and Paper	15.60	<u>96.14</u>
		\$3,860.40

Membership Report

Membership -- May 31, 1989	243	New Members
New Members	<u>2</u>	Viola E. Aldrich, Barre, VT
	245	Charles W. Kling, Evanston, IL
Deceased	1	Deceased
Suspended	<u>1</u>	Janice Ackermann 4-23-89
Membership -- July 31, 1989	243	

We received a note from the son of Janice Ackermann informing us of her death on April 23. As she requested, her love token collection will remain in the family.

The post office has returned mail addressed to Holly Crowell, 305 Greenwood Drive, Chesire, CT 06410, stating that her forwarding order has expired. Can any member provide her new address?

Have you paid your \$10 dues for 1989? Nearly half the members have not paid as of July 20. Dues are due January 1 each year. The post office and printing company do not extend credit, therefore dues are needed at the beginning of the year to pay expenses. If you have not paid, please send it now. The by-laws require all members with unpaid dues by May 31 of each year to be suspended.

Charles H. Godfrey, Secretary-Treasurer

Love Token Society Officers

<i>President</i>	<i>Vice President</i>	<i>Secretary/Treasurer</i>	<i>Love Letter Editor</i>
Lloyd L. Entenmann	Judith A. Murphy	Charles H. Godfrey	Robert C. Newhouse
130 Cornell Road	P.O. Box 24056	3575 Sipler Lane	3200 Ella Lane
Audubon, NJ	Winston-Salem, NC	Huntingdon Valley, PA	Manhattan, KS
08106	27114	19006	66502
609 547-2857	919 765-5335	215 947-5846	913 539-1831

For the Love of Pete or Mary or John

By Paul Carter

After reading the interesting articles in *Pennywise* on counter-marked and mutilated large cents, and inasmuch as love tokens fall into the same category, I thought that an article on them might be of interest. It is only recently that love tokens have become collectible items and have been sought after by collectors, and very little has ever been written about them. Hence, what I have to say will be based mostly on personal observations.

Although love tokens belong to the same family tree as counter-marked and mutilated coins, they are a distinct entity of their own and they occupy a prominent place on the tree. It must be remembered that counterstamps could be and were produced by anyone with a hammer and punch, whereas the production of love tokens required artistic ability and skill with graving tools. It is this artistic appeal which accounts for the new popularity of love tokens, and rightly so, for the artists who produced them have turned out some beautiful pieces. I have intentionally called the engravers of love tokens "artists" for they were that in the true sense of the word. Their cutting had to be done with skill and care, and there was no allowance for error. A slip with the graving tool meant disaster, as the piece was then ruined.

There is no record as to who first applied the term *love token* to these pieces, but whoever it was must have done so symbolically. It is rare to find a love token with the word *love* engraved on it. Instead, the gravers used various symbols of love such as two overlapping hearts, entwined initials, a bow with arrows, an arrow in a heart, love birds, Cupid and others. One of the best which I can recall showed a heart bearing harp strings which were being plucked by Cupid.

Occasionally, a necklace or bracelet of love tokens is found intact. These often tell a

story in themselves and undoubtedly reflect the personality of the former owner. Inasmuch as it is not uncommon to find a necklace or bracelet bearing eight or 10 male names, there must have been head hunters in the love token era, too. Women had no more scruples about hanging another conquest to their necklace or bracelet than their literal counterpart in the South American jungles.



Although I have had in my possession several complete necklaces or bracelets during the past few years, I failed to keep an accurate record of the various tokens and the stories they told. Much work needs to be done in this area. But, as an illustration, the bracelet might contain various tokens, each of which had a specific meaning to a particular couple: Token #1 - male and female names in a wreath of vines; Token #2 - bluebirds singing, perched on a limb, scroll work around the edge; Token #3 - a canoe and paddles with water lilies and cattails around the edge; Token #4 - an owl under a crescent, leaves around the edge; Token #5 - two overlapping hearts with an edge design of flowers; Token #6 - a love seat with fireplace in the background, edge framed in diamonds; Token #7 - wedding bells in a lace wreath.

A collector who becomes interested in love tokens as single pieces will find them unsurpassed as to variety. No two are exactly alike, even when made by the same engraver. In fact, the differences are so

Letter from the Editor

As I enter my term as editor of the Love Letter, I do so with a sense of excitement and professionalism. I am of the opinion that a newsletter is not only the key communicator of an organization, but also a reflection of the membership itself, and it is my intention to project a positive, professional image of our society. By the same token (pun intended), I cannot do it alone. A newsletter is only as good as the contributions of its members, so I am asking for your help. We are in great need of original articles by you or someone else--

stories related to love tokens or coins, some incident you may have experienced, a sharing, something for sale, a classified ad, an opinion, or a letter to the editor.

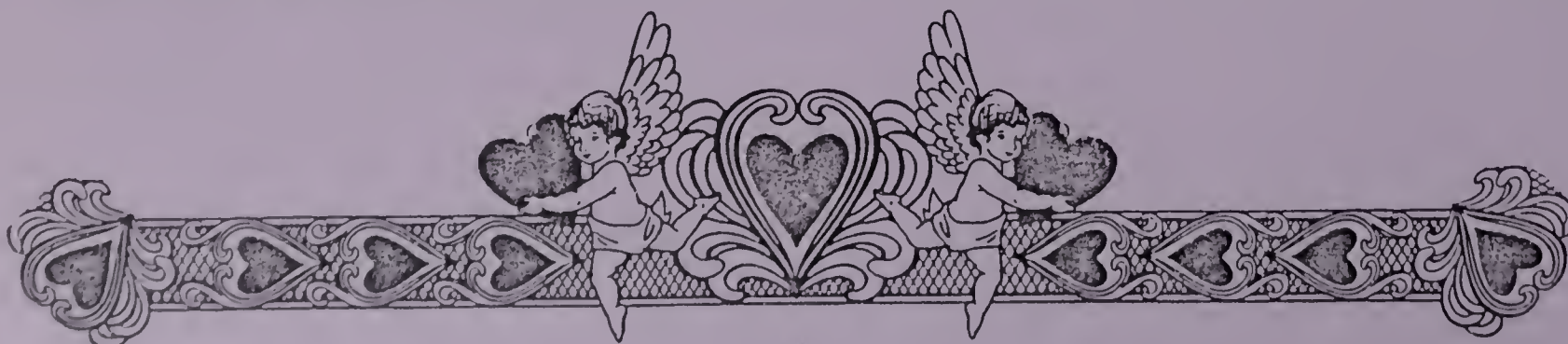
I am sure you have noticed a change in the style and format of the current issue. As a new editor, I plan to do a bit of experimenting as time goes on. Let me know how you feel, and any suggestions are welcome. An active membership will produce an active newsletter. Let's hear from you.

Thanks,
Bob

Love Tokens for Sale

Dr. Sol Taylor, P.O. Box 5465, N. Hollywood, CA 91616-5465, has the following love tokens for sale. If interested, contact him.

- 1883 Liberty Head Nickel**, XF rev., elaborate scenic with lighthouse, sand dunes and sea, with monogram GFY in sky.....\$17.95
- 1882 Morgan Dollar**, scuffed VF, traces of clasp; rev. intricate monogram with AHE, nice VG-F overall, few edge bumps.....\$55.00
- One side engraved SOL, other side BETTIE in Gothic.....\$9.00
- 1883 Liberty Nickel, Unc.**, full luster, Plain field with Mtra.....\$12.50
- Dime size, one side blank, other side MMM interlocked, tiny hole at 12 o'clock.....\$5.00
- 1874 Latin American \$5 size gold**, with loop, VF, .900 fine, enameled monogram A in red E in black, exhibit piece.....\$125.00
- 1826 George IV Shilling**, trace of gilt, Rev. 3 color enamel, red crown, blue field.....\$15.00
- 1857 Dime**, G clasp removed, Rev. MAK, fancy rim design, VG-F.....\$5.00
- 1871 Seated Half Dollar**, center solder blob, VG-F, in scroll D.J.L. to J.L., fancy triple rim 7 edge designs, slight field bumps\$17.50
- Great Britain George LLL Shilling**, bull head, Rev. plain field, E.C.H. on plain field.....\$9.00
- 1950 Seated Quarter**, J.E.G. with Jan. 5 on right, solder spots on reverse, overall VF.....\$15.00
- 1853 Seated Quarter**, pin intact, Rev. in flowery script CAN with wreaths above and below, nice workmanship.....\$15.00
- 1850-Seated Dollar**, AG overall, Mar. 3, 1861 engraved at base of Liberty, Rev. C.W. Ferguson engraved above eagle (may be G.W.).....\$145.00



pronounced, it is difficult to find two that even remotely resemble each other. This makes cataloguing one's collection somewhat difficult. One reasonable way would be to catalogue them as to types: e.g. by initials, landscapes, seascapes, animals, flowers, birds, buildings, etc. Another would be to catalogue them as to various types of jewelry: e.g. bracelets, necklaces, pins, brooches, buttons and watch fobs.

Love tokens seem to have been popular at three various periods during our nation's history: 1860-1864 during the Civil War; 1880-1890; and 1914 to the middle 1920s. 1885 was a particularly prominent year. These observations are based on the predominance of uncirculated coins from those periods which have been made into love tokens.

During the time of the Civil War, many of the larger coins, such as half dollars and quarters, were made into dog tags. These usually bear the soldier's name, rank and company and the name or initials of the donor.

In the 1914-1925 period, another type was used. These coins were not defaced but were frosted, painted with an enamel, baked in a kiln and glass-fused. They usually have a loop attached and were used as pendants. They are generally quite attractive. I have seen Barber half dollars and Peace dollars so treated and at present have a 1917 Standing Liberty quarter used for this purpose.

Occasionally, a rare date coin is found which has been made into a love token, much to the chagrin of the finder. I can recall seeing a 1799 silver dollar which had been engraved with two pairs of initials and with delicate vines and leaves in the obverse field. It should be remembered that the coins so decorated were just circulating coins at the time, and if they had not become love tokens, they might never have been found.

From personal observation, almost every coin series in the U.S. mintage has come under the engraver's eyepiece and has been made into love tokens. Dimes were most commonly

used and in succession came the \$1 gold pieces, half dimes, quarter dollars, half dollars, the three-cent silver pieces, \$2 1/2 gold pieces, Morgan and Trade dollars, \$5 gold pieces and the 20-cent pieces. Large cents were rarely used as love tokens. Those so used generally contained names, sometimes with a business address, or names and symbols of fraternal organizations. Three-cent nickel and five-cent nickel pieces were also rarely used, presumably because the metals were too difficult to work. Likewise, copper and nickel pieces were of low value. Who could risk the ire of his lady love by using a coin of so little value and the implication which it might suggest?



Most love tokens preserve the obverse of the coin and the date, the latter usually being significant to the parties concerned: e.g. date of birth, date of marriage, the year the couple met, etc. The reverse was usually ground off, buffed, polished with jeweler's rouge, the design laid out with a small prick punch and then the artist, using an eyepiece, cut the design into the metal with graving tools. There were various methods of finishing the pieces: those for use on watch fobs were often gold-plated to match the chain; when used as a brooch, they were often inlaid with black as a contrast. Many tokens were darkened in the incuse design to show up better on the polished surfaces.

I have been fortunate to see many different types of love tokens, living as I do near Attleboro, Massachusetts, the so-called *Jewelry City of the World*. Some of the finest engravers in the country have worked at Attleboro.

Today, machine engraving and press work, the one being a stereotype of the other, have replaced the hand engraving of the past, and these have destroyed the production of love tokens with their endless varieties based on the artist's freewill choice.

If one has a love token, he can be assured that is the real thing and not a modern counterfeit, as the cost of reproduction would be too prohibitive. For example, if one used a Seated Liberty dime which sells today for about \$1.50 and then paid another \$8 or \$10 for the hand engraving, it would make the selling price of the token quite high. Love tokens are one of the most reasonably price collectible items on the market today. You can be sure that they will not remain that way long.

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